

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Alexander Melville Bell, September 10, 1879

Letter written by Alexander Graham Bell to his Father. Cambridge, Mass., September 10th, 1879. Dear Papa:

I enclose rough copy of a letter to my friend Mr. H. R. Bishop of New York — a very wealthy man — who has recently made very successful speculations on Telephone stock. He made \$600,000 in a few months by the New York Elevated Railroad and has already made about \$90,000 by stock of the Bell Telephone Company.

I would propose that you and Mr. Williams sell him an interest, say $\frac{1}{2}$, in the Canadian Patents for \$100,000 and give him your Power of Attorney to dispose of the patents. The enclosed letter gives you the substance of my communication to him. I have told him that you will telegraph me upon receipt of this letter whether or not you could meet him in Albany on Saturday so that I shall be prepared on receiving a telegram from him to reply on your behalf whether you will meet him in Albany or not. I don't know the hotels there and so have arranged that he should specify a hotel in his telegram and I would let you know by telegraph. This is Wednesday and this letter should reach you Thursday afternoon or Friday morning. You could leave Brantford for Buffalo on Friday afternoon at 4:30 by Grand Trunk — and reach Albany at 6 o'clock Saturday morning. I would meet you there and you could return the same day.

Bring all contracts — and papers with you. Also copy of 2 Canadian Patent. If this comes to nothing — Bell Telephone Company wants you to send copies of all the contracts you have made in Canada that they may understand exactly how matters stand — and how far a purchaser of your patent would be bound by pre-existing contracts.

Your affectionate son, Alec.

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(Copy) Cambridge, Mass., September 10, 1879. "H. R. Bishop, Esq., New York. My dear Sir:

Do you want to become still further interested in Telephone affairs than you are now. If so — I have a plan to suggest to you that might prove as profitable a venture to you as your recent investment in Telephone stock — and prove at the same time beneficial to my father.

My Canadian Patents are owned jointly by my father and a friend. A young and thriving business has been established on Canadian soil — in spite of the opposition — not of a Canadian Company — but of the American Speaking Telephone Company of New York — which has pushed its way into Canada through the influence of the Western Union Telegraph Company and its ally the Montreal Telegraph Company of Canada. The Dominion Telegraph Company of 3 Canada (leased by Jay Gould for 99 years) are introducing Telephones into Canada under my patents there — and not as my father's agents.

Of course the negotiations now pending between the National Bell Telephone Company and the American Speaking Telephone Company — must affect the condition of affairs in Canada as well — and the Bell Telephone Company desire to purchase the Canadian Patent before making arrangements with the Western Union.

The Dominion Company of Canada however has everything to fear from a consolidation of interests between the Bell Telephone Company and American Speaking Telephone Company. For the Montreal Telegraph Company — (which is affiliated with the Western Union) — is the business opponent of the Dominion Company. Under these circumstances my father is now in negotiation with the Dominion Telegraph Company for the purchase of the Canadian Patent rights. Between the Dominion Company and the Bell Telephone Company I think that a good trade could be made if the matter were properly managed. I feel however that neither my father nor his friend have any experience of business matters

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on the large scale — and that it might pay them to sell you an interest in the Canadian Patents and put the conduct of the negotiations into your hands. If you would care to look into this matter — it will be necessary for you to move at once.

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In order to save time I send a copy of this letter to my father in Canada. Of course I have no power to make any proposition to you and merely write to sound you upon the subject. If you care to look into the matter seriously — telegraph me and we can arrange a meeting between you and my father. In haste.

Yours truly, Alexander Graham Bell. P. S. To save time — suppose we say — if agreeable to my father and convenient to you — that we meet him in Albany on Saturday the 13th inst. If you consider the matter telegraph me in reply that you would be willing to meet my father in Albany on Saturday. I don't know the names of the hotels there but if you specify in your telegram the name of one — I will telegraph my father so that we may all meet there on Saturday. I write to my father, by this mail, to inform him and if you accede I shall telegraph to ask him to meet us in Albany and if his reply is satisfactory I shall telegraph you to that effect.